

Psychoanalysts View Aggression

THE 27TH CONGRESS of the International Psychoanalytical Association addressed itself to the subject of aggression. Psychological evidence was offered viewing aggression as an instinctual drive as yet unrelated to any physiological phenomena other than brain functioning. The discharge of aggression is associated with pleasure and the lack of discharge with unpleasure. The aim of aggression is not necessarily the destruction of the object, but varies with the mental development and experience of the aggressor. It is not known whether aggression and sexuality are separate at birth and gradually fuse during development, or whether the two differentiate from a common matrix.

A plea was made, at the meeting, for interdisciplinary research to bring the problem of aggression closer to solution. The sociologist can assist in the study of collective aggression in large groups, and also assist psychoanalysts in making a significant contribution to the examination of a society at war, in a state of rebellion or other violent disturbance. The vicissitudes of individual life, as seen in early object relations, and the vicissitudes of social life based on the objective conditions of a community must be explored by combining psychoanalytical and psychosocial research. From this cooperation with other humanistic sciences, it is hoped that the analytic researcher will fashion a more precise evaluation and diagnosis relative to the origins and fate of aggression.

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Wrist Slashers

A STUDY OF POLICE REPORTS revealed that people who cut their wrists are younger, more often single and more often male than those who attempt suicide by other means. Wrist slashers are no more likely to repeat attempts at suicide than others. The commonly held belief that women far outnumber men as wrist cutters was not verified possibly because women attempters are more likely than men to seek treatment in private facilities.

In the emergency room, efforts should be made to establish the complex significance of the slash. The patient's ego controls should be assessed and hospitalization of the psychotic slasher, including stringent suicide precautions, is necessary. Psychotic guilt is a serious sign of suicidal intent, and such patients are to be expected to try again. Optimal treatment of slashers includes psychotherapy tailored to specific situations and personality structures.

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Black Physicians and Black Clients—Is It “A Family Affair”?

THE BLACK PHYSICIAN, as a result of his traditional medical training, even if in a black college, may unwittingly adopt stereotyped values toward other helping disciplines, such as psychiatry and psychology, because of the necessity in his training program to meet white approval in order to be legitimized.

Admittedly, the black physician, in his work with the “colonized” black patient, is usually innovative when he is effective. This is not to imply that the value of his traditionally approved training should necessarily be minimized, for when the black physician “respects himself,” he will have no difficulty working on either side of Wilshire Boulevard applying “different strokes for different folks.”

In psychiatric circles, in particular, a consider-